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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

On 13 and 19 June 2003, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to Israel and all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 57/117 to 57/123, in particular paragraph 4 of resolution 57/122, and requesting information by 18 July 2003 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation. A reply dated 1 July 2003 was received from Israel, covering various aspects of resolutions 57/117 to 57/123. The full text of that reply is reproduced in the present report. No information has been received from other Member States regarding the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 57/122.

* A/58/150.

** The present report was submitted on 4 August 2003 so as to include the most up-to-date information.

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1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 57/122 of 11 December 2002, on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. On 13 June 2003, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to resolutions 57/117 to 57/123, all of 11 December 2002, and requested that the Permanent Representative of Israel inform him by 18 July 2003 of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. On 19 June 2003, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 57/117 to 57/123, in particular paragraph 4 of resolution 57/122, and requesting information by 18 July 2003 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 1 July 2003 was received from Israel, covering various aspects of resolutions 57/117 to 57/122. The text reads as follows:

> "The position of the State of Israel on these resolutions has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years, the latest of which being Israel's note verbale of 15 August 2002. In the light of the desire of the State of Israel to bring an end to all acts of violence and terrorism in the region and achieve a negotiated settlement, as well as the efforts currently under way to restart the peace process, Israel wishes to express its regret that the aforementioned resolutions, concerning the efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), continue to be rife with irrelevant politicized rhetoric that detracts from the important efforts at hand. Accordingly, Israel abstained on resolution 57/120 and voted against resolutions 57/117, 57/119, 57/121, 57/122 and 57/123.
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> "Israel fully supports the humanitarian mission of UNRWA and believes that UNRWA contributes to the alleviation of the suffering of the Palestinian refugees. We remain concerned, however, regarding a number of issues related to the politicization of UNRWA operations. As a humanitarian agency, it is incumbent upon UNRWA to refrain from any actions or statements concerning political questions beyond its mandate. On several occasions, UNRWA has issued irresponsible anti-Israeli statements that ignore the right and duty of Israel to defend its citizens from the campaign of terror being waged against it for close to three years. Israel believes that such statements and, in particular, certain public comments made by the current Commissioner-General, exceed UNRWA's mandate, are counterproductive and are not conducive to a productive working relationship. Furthermore, such statements are contrary to the obligation of UNRWA, and especially its management, to work in an impartial and non-political manner.
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> "Israel is also concerned that UNRWA has failed to address the problems caused to the fulfilment of its mandate by the extensive terrorist infrastructure that has taken root in Palestinian 'refugee camps'. While Israel recognizes that UNRWA does not have a mandate to enforce security and public order, Israel urges UNRWA to draw attention to the misuse of these 'camps' by armed elements that violate Security Council resolutions and international law and

pose a clear danger to the safety and security of the civilian population and the safe fulfilment of the UNRWA mandate.

"Israel looks forward to continuing its cooperation and working relationship with UNRWA. Accordingly, Israel urges the Secretary-General and UNRWA to consider, together with the parties concerned, ways in which the organization can enhance the fulfilment of its mandate in an accountable and responsible manner in the best interests of those whom UNRWA has been charged to serve."

5. No information has been received from other Member States with regard to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 57/122.